

TONOPAH DAILY BONANZA

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W. W. BOOTH, Editor and Manager

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For President---1912 WILLIAM HOWARD TAFT, Of Ohio.

THE GERMAN POTASH SITUATION.

American consumers and dealers in potash have been obliged to bow to the will of the German government and pay the price fixed arbitrarily by the official German Kali Syndicate since the imperial German potash law went into effect two years ago, but they have not lost interest in the success or failure of the economic plan to which they were so much opposed. They know that the price of potash has gone up and that many new mines have been opened up to get a share of the allotment which involves an economic waste that bears hard on consumers.

American buyers were forced to give up their contracts with the Aeschersleben and Sollestedt mines controlled by the Schmidemann interests to avoid payment of the excess production tax, the club devised by the German government to beat them into submission. The ostensible purpose of the potash law was to conserve the potash resources of Germany and to put the business on a sound footing. The authorities hoped to be able to discourage the opening up and exploiting of new potash mines, but this part of the plan has failed.

The quota of potash awarded to each mine depends in part on the equipment and number of shafts or mine entries in operation. In the struggle for increased allowances, much capital has been sunk in unnecessary improvements. The Aeschersleben mine now operates two shafts and the Sollestedt mine one shaft, which are sufficient for a far greater production than the law permits them. In order to get a larger share, the former mine will sink two more shafts which, with the complementary equipment, will cost 4,000,000 marks, though this expenditure is absolutely needless; and the same is true of the Sollestedt mine. Other mines are doing the same thing and the wasteful locking up of capital in this way is becoming a serious matter.

Two years ago the number of potash mines in operation jumped from 55 to 68. Now 97 mines are in operation, and when the shafts now being sunk are in working order the number will be increased to 113, three-fourths of which are not needed, as far as ability to produce all the potash the world can consume at present prices is concerned. The capacity of thirty of the shafts now in operation is equal to the world's demands.

This wasteful competition has greatly increased the cost of producing potash salts, says the New York Commercial, but the temptation afforded by artificially high prices is too great to be resisted, and small mines keep coming into the field to get a share of the profits. In trade circles it is estimated that if the best mines were permitted to work to their capacity, standard muriae of potash could be sold for \$25 a ton or less, and the small mines, if they would shut down, could be paid for so doing more than they now earn for their owners, while the big mines would, after subsidizing the small ones, make larger profits than they now earn on a restricted output, with muriae at \$39 a ton in New York.

As additional mines come into operation and secure a share of the total output under the law, the waste of effort and the cost of production keep on increasing and to satisfy the small concerns the Kali Syndicate has to mark up the price. When the field was open, the best mines naturally got the lion's share in a competitive market at a range of prices that yielded a good profit to them but that were low enough to keep most of the small mines out of business. This did not please the owners of the small mines and the workmen they employed. Votes count in Germany just as here, and the labor vote had much to do with securing the passage of a law that is proving wasteful in practice.

Germany must settle this question without foreign interference. If potash mines are developed in this country or anywhere else that can compete with German mines at the present artificial level the loss of trade will compel a change in the law. Some German mines, if let alone, can turn out potash salts at half the current prices and still make large profits. The potash law violates all recognized principles of political economy, and the possibility of making

the plan work will soon be demonstrated. Some of the leading German newspapers, such as the Berliner Tageblatt and the Frankfurter Zeitung, have opposed it from the start, and are caustic in the criticisms of the results it is producing.

SPOILS OF OFFICE.

Congress is averse to passing legislation that will cut off patronage in an election year. Candidates can promise jobs to half the voters in their districts if they can mention a few offices that will be at their disposal should they and their party win next November. That they cannot fulfill these pledges does not matter. The votes will be counted first. On federal jobs, pensions and the "pork barrel," members depend for re-election, and it is cruel to ask them to do anything for the good of the public service or the reduction of taxes when they are suffering from the pangs of hunger for office.

While a good improvement has been made in the consular service in the last six or seven years, the public may have forgotten that this has been due to presidential influence and not to the law. When the 1905 bill regulating the service was passed, Congress very carefully, though quietly, cut out the original bill, the civil service clauses which would have taken it out of politics. President Taft has done his utmost to get Congress to pass the necessary amendments and a bill to that effect is now before the House of Representatives. As of old, it is being quietly choked to death with as little noise as possible.

As far as election purposes go, the consular service is still part of the spoils system. It is true that if President Taft is returned to office he will block the payment of election debts by refusing to nominate the heelers who have been promised jobs in nice climates or where fishing is good; but this is only a makeshift way of purifying the service which might break down whenever another man reaches the White House.

Wilbur J. Carr, director of the consular service, told the House committee recently that "the tendency at the beginning of a new administration is to bring to bear upon the president such an amount of political pressure in various forms as to make it sometimes difficult, if not impossible, to avoid a modification of a regulation of the president's own making." Needless to say, Mr. Carr refers to the performance of election pledges made by successful candidates. A Congress that will vote for such pension bills as this one did to win votes, is not likely to curtail the spoils system this year.

The following brilliant bit appeared a few days ago in the San Bernardino News, one of the third term advocates:

"On the theory that the early bird catches the worm, Colonel Roosevelt would seem to stand some chance of getting a few delegates in Ohio. He is making speeches as early in the morning as 6:40 o'clock. Incidentally the Ohioans must be deeply interested in the present contest being waged in their midst to turn out at that hour to hear a political speech."

There may be some doubt as to whether the Roosevelt delegates from Ohio deserve so contemptuous a characterization as "worms," but Roosevelt is a "bird" all right. Also, he has been pretty "early" in claiming things on which his eager hands never will be placed.

Let's take the market basket and go down to market and cut the high cost of living. The markets are at their best just now, and if you are a shrewd buyer you can save a pretty penny. We've never had very much of a quarrel with the corner grocer. His prices seemed a little high, but we have never seen any one grow enormously rich on that corner, and we have known several to fail, while they all seemed to work from dawn to dark. When we consider that we demanded he come around daily and take orders, that when we telephoned imperiously a rush order he sent post haste, we always felt perhaps the grocer had a little argument about his prices that would stick and we could not answer.—Cincinnati Commercial Tribune.

For a man that imagines himself to be successful, and makes at least a strong pretense of believing in his own virtuousness and greatness, Hiram Johnson appears to be a very uncomfortable person. His efforts to cripple the Panama-Pacific International Exposition, in his rage over the breaking down of the Johnson machine through the strain put upon it in the Roosevelt campaign, is that of a man who lost all judgment. "The best governor California ever had" is making a fearful show of himself.

The fire losses of the United States and Canada for the month of April, as compiled by the New York Journal of Commerce, aggregated \$16,394,000, as compared with \$17,670,550 for the same month of last year. Comparing the total fire loss so far this year with previous years, it is apparent that unless the fire losses for the remainder of this year are lighter than for the same period of 1911 the fire underwriters generally will do business at a loss for 1912.

The powers, it is again reported, are growing restless over the Italian-Turkish war, which now has been in progress for several months. Their feeling, doubtless, is much like that of a big baseball crowd in the eleventh or twelfth inning of a game when the score stands 0 to 0 and but few hits have been made.

Following the perilous example of people in other lands, the negroes of a region in Cuba have started an insurrection. In prospect, such uprisings often look highly attractive to those who are to participate in them, but the experience generally proves disappointing. War is what Sherman said it was.

Canine owners of Oakland make a joke of the dog muzzling ordinances of the city by placing the muzzle on their dog's tails. Really those Oakland people have a fine sense of humor, which will probably endure until some of them get chewed by a mad pup.

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